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Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5431 st meeting

Friday, 28 April 2006, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Peru	Mr. Morote
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2006/249)

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06-33156 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2006/249)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/249, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/268, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Spain, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

I wish to draw the attention of members to documents S/2006/258 and S/2006/266, containing the texts of letters dated 24 and 26 April 2006, respectively, from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria and Namibia addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1675 (2006).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): The United States voted in favour of the resolution in the hope that parties will use the next six months to make real progress towards reaching a mutually acceptable solution that brings peace, stability and economic prosperity to the region in a manner consistent with the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

We recognize the important role of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara in those efforts, but we must continually monitor the ability of the Mission to carry out its mandated tasks, taking into account limited peacekeeping resources.

The United States looks forward to the next report of the Secretary-General prior to the end of the current mandate period, and hopes that the parties will have begun to take meaningful steps towards a final resolution of the dispute.

The settlement of the Western Sahara conflict would enhance the stability and economic prosperity of the Maghreb. Unresolved, the conflict and humanitarian crisis continue to be the primary impediments to regional integration and development. The United States cannot impose a solution, but together we can continue to urge the parties to work together and with the United Nations in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. Morocco has expressed its intention to put forward an autonomy plan for the territory, and we encourage it to submit a plan that is at once strong and credible in the hope that it might form the basis of a new United Nations-led negotiating process.

Our hope over the next six months is simple, but, we hope, not too ambitious. It is that we will see significant progress towards launching a diplomatic effort that will allow the parties to move beyond the status quo in the direction of a final resolution of a dispute that has already gone on too long.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): The United Kingdom voted in favour of the resolution just adopted by the Council to renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for a further six months.

Since the resolution is a technical rollover of the mandate and does not respond to any other recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report this month, we would like to set out some aspects of the situation which we consider to be particularly important.

We would like to commend MINURSO for its ongoing stabilization and ceasefire monitoring role, and for its efforts at restructuring. We would also like to thank Mr. Van Walsum, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, for his efforts to find a way forward in the dispute.

The United Kingdom believes that the approach outlined in the Secretary-General's report — that of direct negotiations without preconditions — offers a way to move beyond the current impasse. The United Kingdom notes the references in the report to the human rights situation and remains concerned by that situation. The United Kingdom fully supports the intention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a delegation to the region.

The United Kingdom hopes that there will be progress beyond the current impasse before the next mandate renewal in October, and that there will therefore not need to be another simply technical rollover. We take this opportunity to stress again that any solution has to be mutually acceptable, in line with United Nations requirements as set out in previous Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): Denmark has just voted in favour of resolution 1675 (2006) extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for an additional six months. Having done so, we would like to add our appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy, Ambassador van Walsum, and the MINURSO operation, for their work towards finding a resolution to the protracted conflict in Western Sahara.

Maintaining the status quo is not a viable option; carries with it the high risk of a renewed outbreak of hostilities, and it thus needs to be emphasized that all parties concerned must engage in renewed dialogue and negotiations in order to move beyond the current impasse. Denmark would welcome any sincere and well-conceived initiative that could move the issue towards a mutually acceptable solution. We appreciate the very difficult task of the Personal Envoy and would like to voice our full support for his continued efforts towards bringing about a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

We thank the Secretary-General for his recent report on the situation in Western Sahara (S/2006/249). In that context, we would like to reiterate Denmark's firm and long-standing position on the need for full respect for human rights. We welcome the plans of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to send a mission to the region, and we look forward to receiving its report.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): Japan voted in favour of, and welcomes the adoption of, the resolution on Western Sahara, which extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for another six months. Given the importance of the role that the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy are playing in the search for a peaceful solution to this issue, Japan welcomes their efforts and will continue to support them.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina voted in favour of the resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for a period of six months, because we understand that the presence of the Mission in Western Sahara continues to be necessary.

My delegation believes that the Security Council must send a clear message to the parties that they must endeavour to find a peaceful resolution to this long-standing dispute. In that connection, we hope that the next six months will be used positively to address the stagnant situation we have seen in recent years. We are convinced that, as in other disputes and conflicts on the agenda of the United Nations, negotiations and dialogue constitute the best way to find a definitive solution in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council and other bodies of the Organization.

In that context, I would like to reiterate my country's support for the work of Mr. Peter van Walsum, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General. We thank him for his efforts in recent months and ask him to continue to work to overcome the current impasse.

Lastly, I would like to stress that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/249) expresses concern at the worsening of the human rights situation in the

territory. We hope that the mission by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will be able to undertake its visit in mid-May in order to investigate the situation and prepare a report.

Given the importance that Argentina attaches to the protection of human rights, we will continue to follow closely the developments in this area. My delegation hopes that these matters will be taken into consideration by the Council when it takes up the next renewal of MINURSO's mandate, in October 2006.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has just renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for an additional six months. That was a good decision, for the United Nations Mission continues to play a useful and stabilizing role.

France hopes that the coming months will be used to the best advantage by the parties and the States of the region to resume the path of dialogue and to find a mutually acceptable political solution. In that regard, the announcement by the Kingdom of Morocco regarding future proposals is an important and encouraging development.

Like the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, to whom we reiterate our support, we believe that direct negotiations offer the only credible prospect for finding a way out of the impasse.

Lastly, we welcome the upcoming visit by a mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We call on all the parties concerned to welcome it properly.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): Slovakia too voted in favour of the technical resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for six more months. We hope that this period will be used to resume dialogue between the parties to find a final solution to the issue of Western Sahara based on direct negotiations. We also agree that adequate attention should be paid to the human rights situation in the area.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania voted in favour of the resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. However, it is our view that the right of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara cannot be subject to any preconditions. As it is, it has gone unfulfilled for far too long. It is our hope that the next six months will witness real progress towards the realization of that right.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.